

# Libraries and literacy – Comic Relief

October 2015 – March 2019



# Key achievements this year

1. Reading outcomes for children on a school level have improved and schools and district inspectors have reported notable gains in literacy due to reading centres and libraries
2. Children that accessed libraries regularly demonstrated gains in class position with 99% of them either maintaining (7%) or improving (92%) their class position
3. Development of mini book industry which allows it to be timely and provided support for hearing impaired students to stay in school
4. Improved administration in local organisation to allow for efficient delivery of project activities-some additional funding has been provided to DASSC to support this (monthly top ups for director and accountant)
5. Year 1 sustaining use of reading centres despite drop off in Nekemte town in the last 3 months due to unrest
6. Improved testing of EGRA (confident it is reliable) now done by team rather than teachers

# Cont...

7. Two new libraries built from scratch funded by EEL and community in kind (raw materials)
8. School buy in. A number of schools have emptied and renovated rooms for their library/reading centre themselves
9. Some employment of librarians in particular in one district Guta Gida. There are 6 librarians employed by the government, 5 in the GG district (Currently 7 schools have libraries and librarians in GG 5 are employed by the government 2 by us). All seven have started as a result of the project. In an interview the GG Education Focal person said *'we pushed and pushed until we got it. We visited the zonal office ourselves to petition for it'*
10. The employment of 41 librarians (35 by us) and 6 by government and the improved economic livelihood that this has given them
11. Additional funding leveraged to support the librarians (10 employed by a grant from Souter Trust and 5 funded by UK schools)

# Book making process:

- One of the students who is currently in grade 12 is Lensa. Her mother died when she was a child and she is the only deaf person in her family.
- Lensa pays EtB 350 (approximately £10) for the house rent together with her friend. As the accommodation is very narrow and crowded, she doesn't feel comfortable with it. They are always changing the houses because the cost of house rent is increasing from time to time.
- Lensa hopes to go to University and after graduating she wants to be a computer scientist. Lensa said she liked the book making process because it *'paved the way for her to continue her education and has created a confidence that she is able to work and earn her living'*. As a result of the book making process, she identified that she *'had developed a habit of working by herself rather than being dependent on others'* and has helped her to *'learn interpersonal skills that assisted her to communicate and work with others'*. With the money that she earns from the book making process, Lensa said she covers the cost of food and stationery. If she hadn't earned money by making books, she feels education might have been interrupted.



# One of the schools.....

- Gara Huda is a very rural school in Wayu Tuku District and it has around 550 students with an average class size of seventy. It is in a very deprived area - the nearest water supply is a river 30 minutes' walk away and there is a shortage of furniture in classrooms. However, it is led by a very passionate head teacher (Ms Yenenesh Bekele) and teachers. With the help of the project, two rooms were renovated; one for a reading centre and the second for a library and all grade 1 to 4 teachers trained. The school is also in the Inclusive Education Project which has helped it form a disability club.



- All grade 1 to 4 students go into the reading centre twice a week. It is really making a difference. For year 2 children, at project outset, only 30% were able to read a single word in the local language (Oromo) and 10% in English. Eighteen months later, based on the sample of ten children, all the children were able to read in English and Oromo.



Lack of books? No – they have all been borrowed!!!

- The project has supported the school to employ a librarian which provides a previously unemployed person a job and the library is now open every day for grade 5 to 8.
- If a teacher is not present the young people come into the library to study. In an average month between 300-600 students visit. In addition, around 50 borrow books.
- The school has 25 children with disabilities. The director makes extra effort to encourage the CwDs to use the library and borrow books through the school disability club which she personally runs. When EEL worked with Vision Aid Overseas to bring a team of ophthalmologists to the area she personally took 6 children with visual impairment the 5 mile walk to get treated and where necessary glasses fitted.

- One of them is Mesgane Gutu who has a mild visual impairment and is in 6th grade. She says that she reads regularly and borrows books weekly.
- In the school and the community, thanks to the work of Yenenesh, disability is never seen as a stigma; and the words disability is not inability are painted in local language above her office entrance.
- 3 new disabled children have joined this academic year. And it is made a difference for Mesgane; in her last assessment she is now ranked number 1 in her class.
- She says “Without the care of the head teacher and the chance to read, I would not be where I am.”



# Better together!

- Partnership of Team (IEP and EEL) to create more effective workforce through:
- Shared cost of office space
- IEP funds cashier which is necessary when delivering training
- Shared monitoring visits which reduces fuel costs and time
- IEP funds admin person who collects and inputs data
- IEP staff run bookmaking project
- IEP staff carry out EGRA testing
- Two motorbikes are used for CR. One has been funded by IEP and one by CR